



Kalamazoo Public Library

2020–21 Annual Report

Kalamazoo Public Library Annual Report July 1, 2020–June 30, 2021

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KPL Locations & Contact Information

Central (CEN)	315 S. Rose St.	Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Eastwood (EAS)	1112 Gayle Ave.	Kalamazoo, MI 49048
Oshtemo (OSH)	7265 W. Main St.	Kalamazoo, MI 49009
Alma Powell (POW)	1000 W. Paterson St.	Kalamazoo, MI 49007
Washington Square (WSQ)	1244 Portage St.	Kalamazoo, MI 49001

**To contact KPL,
Please call: (269) 553-7800
or visit KPL's website
at: [kpl.gov](https://www.kpl.gov)**

Serving the Kalamazoo Community During a Pandemic



Opening Letter from Library Director Ryan Wieber

The role of public libraries experienced a seismic shift during 2020–2021 as the world continued to react to the effects of COVID-19. Kalamazoo Public Library was no exception, as staff identified and implemented new ways to reach residents with access to services and collections, all with limited open hours and fewer face to face interactions with patrons. KPL pivoted to online programming: story hours, author visits, a Teen book *Read-Along!*, ONEplace workshops and first-ever virtual *Youth Literature Seminar* and *Reading Together* events. “KPL TV” introduced a convenient way for patrons to access a catalog of incredible online programming content at [kpl.gov](https://www.kpl.gov). Curbside-only service at every location provided patrons a means to check out library materials, activity kits, and Law Library materials. More digital content found its way to the library’s

digital shelves by way of new collections and enhanced purchasing, all in an effort to ease the effect of closed doors or reduced hours.

Meanwhile, new services already in motion (such as the Mobile Library) were deployed during the year to assist with library outreach efforts where possible. Through the *Digital Access for All* (DAFA) partnership with Kalamazoo Public Schools (KPS), the City of Kalamazoo’s Foundation for Excellence, The Kalamazoo Promise, and the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, KPL provided quick access to 1,000 Wi-Fi hotspots for KPS students and their families. The library also introduced its “Library of Things” (LOT), a collection of non-traditional library items available to support patrons with household, educational, and technology-related needs such as Chromebooks, tools, calculators, and cookware.

The pandemic has changed forever how we provide library service. We have learned to be nimble and to adapt, yet it also exposed weaknesses in our service to the underprivileged and disadvantaged, and those who struggled the most due to restrictions of access, income, and support. Our tasks ahead are to work hard at finding new ways to provide the best possible impact the library can deliver to residents, and to reintroduce the library to those who stepped away because of the pandemic.



COVID-19 Impacts Kalamazoo

In **Spring of 2020**, all KPL locations were forced to close to help mitigate the spread of COVID-19. We covered our immediate response to the pandemic and how we quickly adapted our services and programming to fit the needs of our community in the 2019-20 fiscal year report. Fiscal year 2020-21

will stand out in KPL's history as a shining example of how times of crisis can bring a community together in support of one another, as well as drive innovative services and productive partnerships dedicated to meeting the needs of the Kalamazoo community when it was needed the most.



Adapting KPL Services to Respond to the Immediate Needs of Our Community

Online KPL Card Sign-up

One of the first things KPL did when the executive order shut library doors to the public was provide a way for patrons to sign up for a KPL card online and gain immediate access to our digital collection. At this time, KPL also expanded its service district to Texas Township residents living in the Mattawan and Schoolcraft school districts. Since launching online cards in **July 2020**, **2,177 KPL cards** were activated online during this fiscal year.



Ask a Librarian

Along with online library card sign-up, KPL also launched an online chat feature to support patrons with accessing our digital catalog as well as directing them to other support services in Kalamazoo. **969 patrons received assistance** via *Ask a Librarian* during this fiscal year.



KPL Goes Curbside

In **November of 2020**, KPL launched *Curbside KPL* to provide equitable library service to those who did not have digital access to our materials or preferred physical materials. Patrons were able to place their holds online or call for assistance, and then pick up their materials at their preferred KPL location via drive-up or walk-up. **19,981 curbside transactions occurred this fiscal year.**



ViaMail

To serve the needs of patrons who could not utilize curbside service, KPL delivered materials to patrons' homes using *ViaMail* with **5,682 total transactions.**

Community Outreach & Partnerships

DAFA — Digital Access for All

On **April 2, 2020**, KPL partnered with Kalamazoo Public Schools, The Kalamazoo Promise, the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, and the City of Kalamazoo with funding provided by The Foundation for Excellence to **provide Wi-Fi hotspots with unlimited internet service to 1,250 households in Kalamazoo**.

The partnership, known as *Digital Access for All* (DAFA) was formed to address Wi-Fi inequities in Kalamazoo, an issue that became more exacerbated during the executive order that closed public schools, libraries, and many local businesses that used to serve as Wi-Fi providers for many families.

Thanks to this partnership, more than **1,200 hotspots were distributed to Kalamazoo families in need** during the 2020–21 fiscal year.



KPL Mobile Library Hits the Streets

The library received its beautiful new *Mobile Library* in **July of 2020** but were unfortunately limited to using it only for deliveries due to the pandemic. In the winter of 2021, we were very excited to partner with more than 20 partner organizations in the community and **put more than 4,000 books into the hands of children and teens!**

During fiscal year 2020–21, The KPL *Mobile Library* was able to make **11 visits to local parks and schools and an additional 300 books were given away**.



Innovative New Services

Providing Lifelong Learning Opportunities

In the **fall of 2020**, KPL launched two new services to support its *Strategic Plan: priority Inspiring Literacy, Learning, and Experiences*.

In response to *Goal 1 Provide opportunities for lifelong learning to create success in school, the workplace and in life*, KPL launched *LinkedIn Learning*, a premier online learning resource **offering more than 4,000 courses** covering technical skills, creative techniques, business strategies, and more. More than **5,297 courses were viewed by patrons** wishing to advance their personal and professional skills during the 2020–21 fiscal year.

Goal 2 challenged KPL to **provide opportunities and access for community members to be creative through hands-on experiences**. While our newly renovated Idea Lab was unfortunately unable to be utilized due to the closures, KPL launched *Creativebug*, an award-winning destination for more than 1,000 high-quality online art and craft video classes. **More than 334 videos were watched** by creative patrons during this fiscal year.

Stream KPL with KPL TV

Online entertainment became crucial for families isolated in their homes during lockdown. KPL wanted to provide some additional viewing options by asking the public to tune in to *KPL TV*. *KPL TV* offers programming for all ages, at every time of day, including book talks, read aloud, programs, interactive community programs and of course, access to our archives of past author visits, concerts, and much more! **Our KPL TV channel received 835,575 views!**

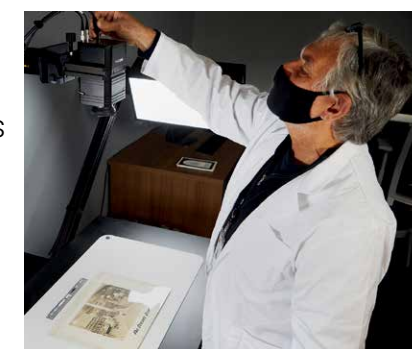


The Digitization Project

Like most public institutions of its kind, Kalamazoo Public Library has a wealth of knowledge locked away in its holdings. Tens of thousands of books, manuscripts, maps, photographs, and documents contain valuable information. Consistent with the library's goals of preservation and equitable access, digitization removes physical barriers to the discovery and use of rare and fragile materials while protecting precious originals from damage. Careful consideration is given to such concerns as digital storage and retrieval, sustainable digital file formats, useful metadata, and more.

KPL has begun an exciting project of digitizing many of its unique holdings. Thanks to a generous bequest, the library has established a state-of-the-art digitization lab where library staff are undertaking the massive task of capturing high-resolution images of archival materials. Those items may then be examined in detail while the originals remain locked away for safekeeping.

Check out what we have preserved so far at kalamazoohistory.org.



Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Librarianship

The Amanda Green Scholarship Fund

According to a 2019 study conducted by the ALA—Department for Professional Employees, **in 2019, just 5.3% of librarians identify as African American, 7.1% as Hispanic or Latino, and 3.5% as Asian American or Pacific Islander.** These numbers reveal an overall lack of diversity in librarianship.

In response, KPL created the *Amanda Green Scholarship*, named after a former library assistant in Teen Services at KPL, to promote the library profession to people of color. By providing monetary assistance to individuals seeking

a master's degree from an accredited library science program, the library hopes to promote the training and hiring of more librarians of color in Kalamazoo and other communities. The scholarship is managed by the Kalamazoo Community Foundation.

In **June 2021**, KPL was excited to announce the first *Amanda Green Scholarship* recipient, Theodore Gill, who was awarded **\$2,500 per semester** and is currently enrolled at Wayne State University and working towards his *Masters of Library and Information Science* degree.



Inspiring Literacy, Learning, and Experiences

Despite the ongoing challenges of multiple closure periods and having to quickly modify our programming for an online audience, KPL was able to continue providing our community's favorite programs such as *Summer Reading Challenge* and *Reading Together*, while also introducing some new programs such as *Read-Alongs* and *Animal Crossings*, all of which enjoyed participation from an audience eager to escape the stress of the pandemic. Here are the highlights of some of our most notable events in 2020–21.

During the 2020–21 Fiscal Year, KPL's early childhood literacy program *Ready to Read* gave away **16,450 books** through various public events and deliveries in the Kalamazoo community, including books donated to the NICU at Bronson Children's Hospital as part of a newborn partnership!



2020 Summer Reading Challenge

KPL had one message for the youth of Kalamazoo during the summer of 2020, and that was to "Stay Strong and Read All Summer Long." We knew that children and teens were greatly affected by the pandemic, given the long periods of isolation, virtual school, and the loss of their normal social routines. Because KPL locations were closed, we decided to put the gameboard in *PRISM*, which is mailed to every household in our service district. We were very surprised and pleased with the number of young readers who chose to escape the chaos of COVID by escaping into the pages of books.

Stats: 2,682 children participated; 1,170 Teens participated for a total of 3,852 participants.



2021 Party in the Park–Online!

Because we were not able to safely host the traditional *Party in the Park* at Bronson Park, we opted to have community leaders record videos that would be shared on KPL TV and our YouTube Channel. We were very honored to be joined by special guest, famed children's author, Todd Parr! Outreach staff were also proud to have been able to deliver **3,000 Party in the Park bags** that contained a snack, literacy materials, and a book to childcare centers, preschools and made them available for pick-up at all KPL locations via curbside service.

The videos collectively received 989 views!

Inspiring Literacy, Learning, and Experiences

continued

2021 Reading Together

2021 marked the first year *Reading Together* was ever held virtually. Featured author

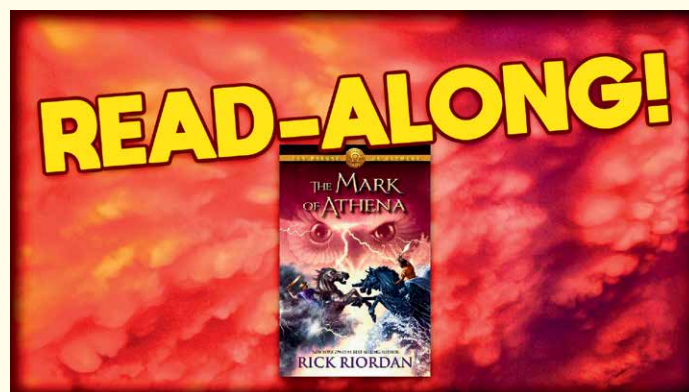
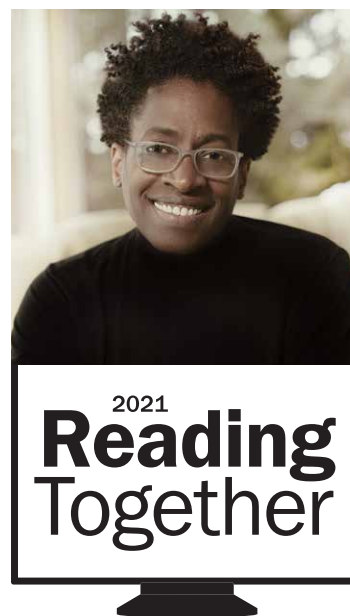
Jacqueline Woodson

hosted two virtual presentations: *Behind the Books*, explaining her personal story of how she became a writer, and *The Power of Story*, which delved into Woodson's childhood growing up in the 1960s and 80s and how that impacted her writing. Prior to Woodson's visit on **March 10, 2021**, a virtual lecture led by WMU Professor

Jill Hermann-Wilmarth explored the impact that Jacqueline Woodson's work has had on children's literature, as well as on the lives of those who have read her work. In addition to the presentations, participants were also encouraged to *Celebrate Story* by sharing their own with KPL, either by recording them or writing them. This collection of stories was posted on the KPL website.

Stats:

- Hermann-Wilmarth Lecture: **85 attendees**
- Woodson's *Behind the Books*: **298 attendees**
- Woodson's *The Power of Story*: **372 attendees**
- *Celebrate Story* compilation: **23 attendees**



Read-Along!

One of the biggest surprise program successes in 2020-21 is by far the global popularity of the *Read-Along!* series! That's right, GLOBAL. Hosted by Lead Teen Librarian Natalie Isham, the *Read-Along!* program was developed during the height of the pandemic to bring literacy to children and teens at home. It is now the most popular virtual program for KPL and the **videos have received more than 60,000 views** (and counting!) from a dozen countries all over the world!

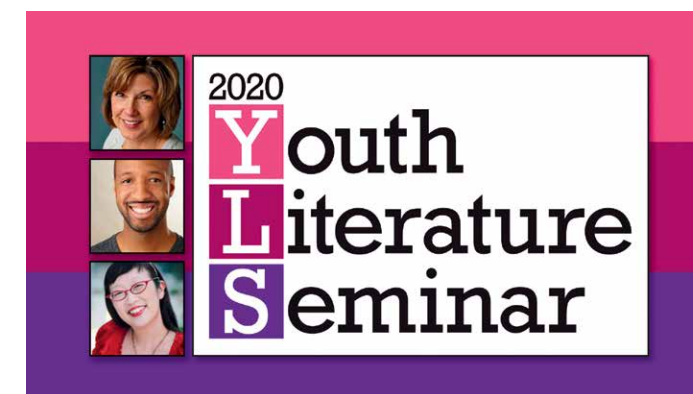


Inspiring Literacy, Learning, and Experiences

continued

Storywalk®

To provide outdoor entertainment for families, three KPL locations including Oshtemo, Alma Powell, and Washington Square set up a *Storywalk*® based off of popular childhood books such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. A *Storywalk*® includes signs, pictures, and clues that tell a story alongside a walking trail. At the end of the walk, participants could pick up a free copy of the book at the participating locations. KPL received a lot of positive feedback from families who were grateful to have something fun and educational to do with their children and get them out of the house during the lockdown.



43rd Annual Mary Calletto Rife Youth Literature Seminar: *The Time Is Now*

The traumatic events that occurred during 2020 have drawn many comparisons to similar events in U.S. history. A pandemic, racism, political and civil unrest, and a floundering economy caused many people to not only experience severe emotional and mental distress but also have torn open old scars for those who have survived similar events.

The 43rd YLS, featuring award-winning authors **Candace Fleming, Varian Johnson & Paula Yoo** focused not only on how 2020 echoed our past, but also how historical trauma affects how we respond to current tragedies.

Stats: 907 attendees participated in several presentations given that day.

Statistics

KPL serves 124,000 residents
5 Locations, 180 staff
Boundaries same as Kalamazoo Public Schools

Circulation

Type	2019-20	2020-21
Print	630,662	566,198
A-V	514,207	277,015
Digital	247,165	274,730
Total	1,392,034	1,117,943
		20% decrease

Annual Visits

Year	2019-20	2020-21
	544,000	139,491
		75% decrease

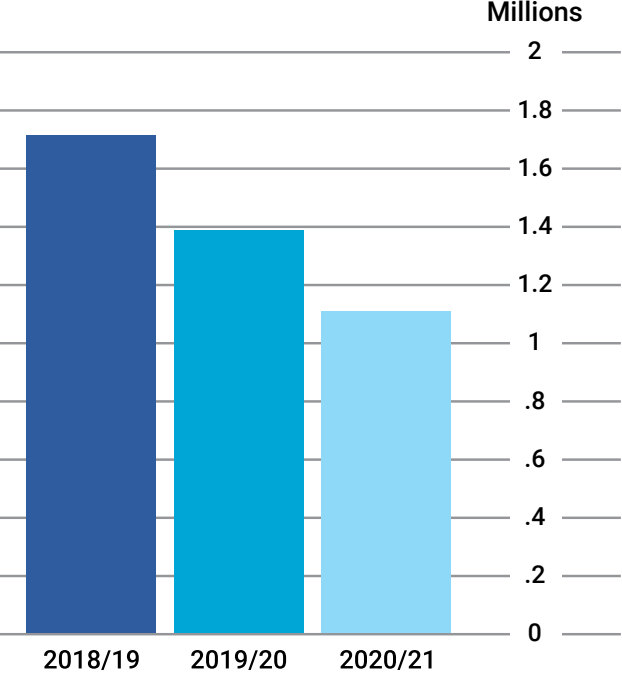
Collections

Collection size: **554,000**
Digital offerings: **1,900,000**

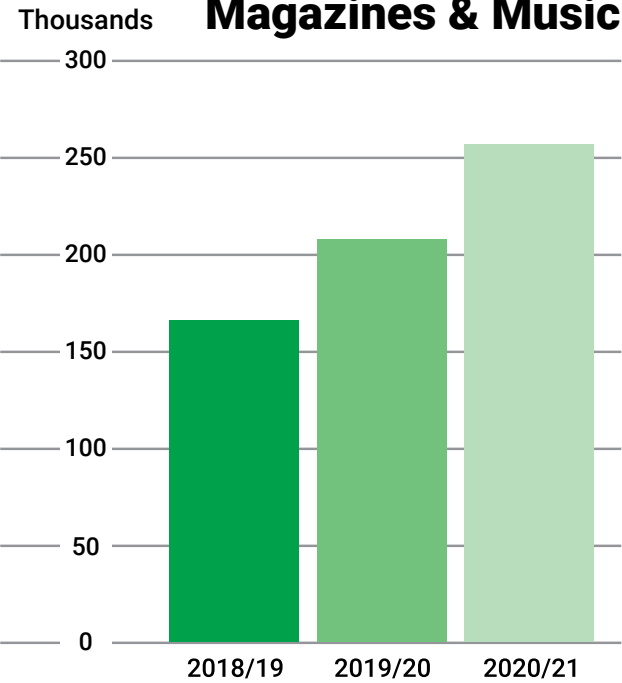
Programming

- Total Children’s Programs:
1,134 with **41,368** attendees
- Total Teen Programs:
287 with **12,238** attendees
- Total Adult Programs:
421 with **10,881** attendees

KPL Circulation— Books, Movies, Music



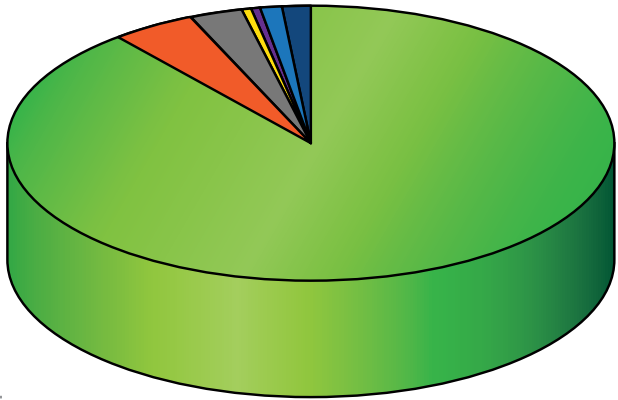
KPL Digital Circulation— eBooks, eAudiobooks, Downloadable Movies, Magazines & Music



Financial Report

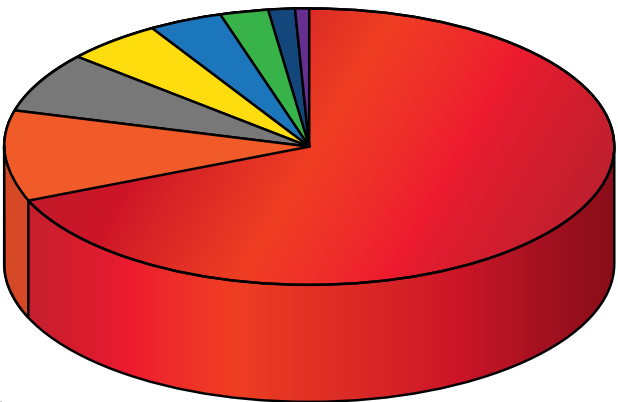
Revenue

Revenue*	Taxpayer Funds
Property Taxes	\$12,069,209
State Aid	\$642,517
Grants and Memorials	\$412,185
Investment Income	\$28,336
District Court Penal Fines	\$140,901
Library Fines and Fees	\$15,976
Other	\$152,477
Total Revenue	\$13,461,599



Expenditures

Expenditures*	Taxpayer Funds
Salaries & Benefits	\$7,845,901
Library Books and Materials	\$1,183,151
Technical & Purchased Services	\$1,168,750
Facilities Maintenance & Repair	\$553,666
Capital Expenditures	\$378,353
Operating	\$308,074
Programming	\$198,019
Other	\$81,239
Total Expenditures	\$11,717,153



* General Operating Fund and Capital Improvement Fund only.

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